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TUESDAY, APRIL 2, 1918.

Traction Unification.

The promise of nothing less than a revolution in local traction conditions is held forth in the significant action taken by the board of directors of the Washington Railway and Electric and the Capital Traction companies yesterday.

The corporations now stand out in the open as advocates of unification. The actual initiative in working out a tangible, concrete plan for a joint operation has come from them. It is clear that they have recognized that they must keep pace with the times, surrendering private interest to public emergency; and that the last roots of reactionary, resistant spirit to the requirements of the new Washington—as it has been fashioned in the past few months on the anvil of the mighty American war machine—must be torn out of their consciousness completely.

So far as we have been able to discover, no voice will be raised against the general plan of unified management that is proposed. When Messrs. Hamilton, Hanna and Guy, representing the Capital Traction Company, and Messrs. Ailes, Truesdell and Ham, representing the Washington Railway and Electric Company, get together over the conference table, as they will within three days, they should be able to make an announcement of their plan in short order, and the details can be worked out in conjunction with the Public Utilities Commission, which naturally will have to approve the entire proposal before any progress can be made upon it. That it will do so, we have no doubt. Mr. Brownlow was quoted last night as saying that he would unhesitatingly approve any phase of the project that seemed in the public interest.

There are two essential features of the highest public interest involved in unification:

1. Universal transfers.
 2. Reducing of cars and remodeling of lines.
- Universal transfers have been a stumbling block in Washington for more than a decade; neither company was willing to accept the obvious curtailment of earnings that would result from them. Nor was their logic without justification. They stood on their legal rights and on the stipulations of their charters.

The day for true corporation statesmanship, however, has arrived; and we take it that one of the first implications of a joint management of the two companies will be the establishment of a universal transfer system. It is to be hoped that the companies will be able to effect such economies and such new efficiency in joint operation as to counterbalance the loss of revenues involved in the universal transfer system.

The possibilities involved in welding these two traction systems into a unified and in rated whole are too big to be considered here. They should be of the highest advantage to the local public; should do more to eliminate congestion than any other agency could possibly do. For instance, just as a suggestion: Suppose the Fourteenth street line of the Capital Traction Company should be permitted to use the Washington Railway and Electric tracks from Pennsylvania avenue, at Fourteenth street, north to New York avenue. This would eliminate the clumsy swing of this line along Fifteenth street, and would clear the "throat" of the local traction situation at Fifteenth street and New York avenue of much of the present intolerable congestion. There are dozens of other details of remodeling of lines that could be adopted with obvious advantage to the public and to the companies themselves.

Curiously enough, there is nothing in the resolutions adopted by the boards of directors of the two companies yesterday indicating that unification was regarded merely as a temporary, or war, measure. In other words, whatever improvements result from it will be made on a permanent basis. It looks as if a new day had, in fact, arrived in the public utilities situation in this Capital City of ours.

At this juncture a brief review of the two corporations may be of interest to those residents of the city who are comparatively new to Washington. The Capital Traction Company is now thirty years old—having been formed under an act of Congress passed June 23, 1888—and is the consolidation of the Washington and Georgetown Railroad Company, which was established in 1862, and the Rock Creek Railway Company, which was created in 1880. It has issued \$1,000,000 of capital stock, has a funded debt of \$2,280,500, and net earnings of \$1,182,647. It is now paying 5 per cent on its stock.

The Washington Railway and Electric Company has a much more involved history. Unfortunately, in the early history of Washington, horse car lines sprang up like mushrooms everywhere, without coordination, having no relation one to the other. Apparently it was the easiest thing in the world to get a franchise to use the public streets in those days. The present system is the result of the amalgamation of no less than eleven companies—the Metropolitan Railroad, the Columbia Railway, the Anacostia and Potomac, the Georgetown and Tenthcity line, the Brightwood line, the Washington and Rockville line, the Washington and Glen Echo Company, the City and Suburban Railway of Washington, the Potomac and Electric Power Company and the United States Electric Lighting Company.

The merger of this congeries of neighborhood lines was a huge task; but it was accomplished in 1902 with obvious benefit to the Washington public. The Washington Railway and Electric Company now has issued \$6,500,000 of common stock and \$8,500,000 of preferred. It has a funded debt of \$16,471,350, not including the funded debt of its subsidiary companies, including the Potomac Electric Power Company. In the past few years, under the King administration, its dividends have been forced up to 1½ and even 1¾ per cent quarterly—but that is a story which need not be gone

into here. That episode in its history ended with the retirement of Mr. King from the presidency. The gross earnings for 1916 were \$5,339,465 and the net earnings \$2,286,480.

When two such lines as these are ready to unite in the interest of efficiency, economical operation, the extension of the service in compliance with public needs, the surest possible measure has been taken against possible government operation of the lines. They have proven capable of reform from within, of a response to the public welfare, that their critics have denied them. The results of this initial action on the part of the companies will be eagerly awaited by Washington.

Reassurance.

Let us not lapse into the cheapest of our national moods—overconfidence and easy optimism. Let us not hold the enemy too lightly. Let us wait and see what the morrow brings forth—and then the day after tomorrow.

Nevertheless the unbroken flow of good news from the front yesterday must give London and Paris much the same kind of feeling that Washington felt after the third day at Gettysburg. It is the most glorious feeling in the world—to be morally certain that you have met the enemy at his worst, and that you have triumphed his best card!

The Hindenburg-Ludendorff machine is floundering in the mud of Picardy, and in the slow but steady attrition of its Berserker-like energy. It is now striking wildly and in vain. Both the British and the French are hitting telling blows against it, burying deadly little rapiers in its huge, gaping flanks, worrying it with the stinging stabs of counter offensives all the way from Arras to Noyon. That is what we can read into the dispatches of this morning. The Boche is at bay. He is breathing hard. The situation has passed out of his control; he can no longer force the pace and make the fight, compelling his enemy to meet him according to his own predigested plans. That great privilege has now passed to Ferdinand Foch.

We have no inkling yet as to where he will deploy his Army of Maneuver for his big blow; we do not know whether he will allow the enemy to commit himself more fully to his present rather untenable position, or will strike without further dalliance. Certainly it would seem on the surface of things as if his great hour were at hand. The German is held, baffled, spent and tired; his artillery is lumbering along in the muddy roads somewhere to the west of him, not yet employed to re-enforce the infantry in its present desperate thrust at Amiens; his divisions have not been welded into a single line; his reserves are thinned, almost to the danger point.

Foch may strike at once, or he may choose the Fabian policy. Clearly we have no real information relating to the Army of Maneuver, which now holds the key to the situation. It may not be in the proper position to strike. An English expert declares that it is unwise to place too much reliance on this reserve army until it has actually proved its efficiency in the battle test. He points out that the British public for three years has enjoyed the most highly colored romances about this self-same Army of Maneuver, and yet at the battle of the Somme, at Arras, at Cambrai, it was more conspicuous by its absence than by its presence. The mobile reserves of the British and French armies is a subject upon which Paris and London have maintained absolute silence for more than three years. It may be that it is only now being welded into an efficient unit, with striking power sufficient to deal the blow that Foch is preparing. It is significant that 100,000 American soldiers are going to be a component part of its make-up.

Nevertheless there is such an army, and it has not yet been called into play. It is inconceivable that Foch will not find dozens of divisions of fresh troops to throw into the fray at the critical juncture. He may be thinking far ahead—even of July and October, perhaps—if he believes that the true magnitude of the German thrust is yet to be disclosed. There is no need of throwing them into the combat now if the troops already in line under Haig and Petain are sufficient to hold the Arras-Lia Fere offensive. They can be held until Hindenburg shows his battle plan in its entirety.

Perhaps before Hindenburg and Ludendorff write "finis" on this year's colossal struggle America will be at the front more than a million strong. If we send over 85 per cent of the troops now in the cantonments before August 1 we will have accomplished a miracle of transport—and have an army on the scene which will be "in at the death."

Build the Ships.

A month or so ago the Shipping Board announced that no contracts for wooden vessels would be let until there was a survey made of the lumber available.

On March 9 Mr. H. B. Van Duzen, of Portland, testified before the Commerce Committee of the United States Senate that 200 vessels of 3,500 tons each could be built in Oregon from available lumber. He also told the committee that the lumber output of Oregon alone in 1917 was 1,600,000,000 feet. Mr. J. H. Bloedel, of Seattle, told the committee that Washington, in one year, could produce 250 ships.

Lloyd J. Wentworth, district supervisor of the Shipping Board for the Columbia River, testified that 200 ships could be built annually in the State of Oregon. The Shipping Board has 53 ways capable of building 106 ships per year. It is said that 78 contracts for wooden vessels have been let, and some have not yet been begun.

A Portland, Oregon, shipbuilder testified that the postmaster reports there is a surplus of labor in Portland. There are really 1,326 vacant houses in Portland and 4,000 men are available, he said, for shipbuilding. He also said that 75,000,000 feet of lumber had been shipped to Eastern markets. These shipments required several thousand cars to transport, and that during a car shortage.

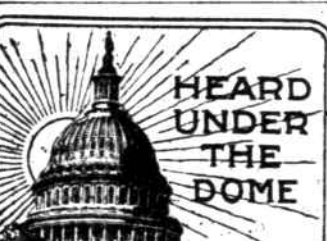
To build ships the logs must be cut in summer. If contracts were given now for wooden ships the whole shipbuilding program would be improved and hastened. The present plan of not giving contracts to any concern except those now holding contracts would seem to limit the production. If other firms owning yards can build the ships why not let them build them? We need the ships, so why limit our orders to yards already forced to their fullest capacity?

Paris, April 1.—No one here has seen Von Hindenburg, due today.

"Plenty of eggs and no cases" is the latest. Just one shortage after another.

There's an Irish song in which Erin is described as "A Little Bit of Heaven." Of course this is true—we haven't the nerve to even question it, but we are equally certain that in the making of the Green Isle there was "a little bit of heaven" left over and transplanted to Chey Chase. There you open your eyes mornings to the music of the lark.

"THE MOUNTAIN LABORED AND BROUGHT FORTH A MOUSE"



"Congressional Government" was written by Woodrow Wilson in the years 1885 and 1886. Subsequently, upon the translation of the volume into French, in the year 1900, the Princeton head wrote a preface, this being attached to what was known as the fifteenth edition of his work.

We will start with this, as it contains some interesting statements, some of them indicative of the thoughts that must be coursing through the President's mind once in awhile nowadays.

The first impressive paragraph reads, in connection with his explanation that the obsolescence of the original manuscript might be charged by its comparison with conditions of fifteen years ago now is the time for fifteen years later.

"Neither did I give sufficient weight to the powers of the Secretary of the Treasury. However minutely bound, guided, restricted by statute, his power has proved at many a critical juncture in our history—especially in our recent financial history—of the utmost consequence. Several times since this book was written, the influence has been witness to his decisive influence upon the money market, in the use of his authority with regard to the bond issues of the government and his rights to control the disposition of the funds of the Treasury. In these matters, however, he has exercised not political, but business power. He has helped the markets as a banker would help them. He has altered no political arrangements which would release money for use and facilitate loan and investment."

This idea of the importance of the office no doubt led President Wilson to write the Secretary of the Treasury with the utmost care. But different than conditions were when Mr. McAdoo was first named as the conditions which greet him now. The importance of managing the country's business is a vast one and the President evidently foresaw that a man to meet a crisis must be installed in office at the outset and must be ready to meet whatever burden might be thrown upon him. The additional duties of railroad director and manager of a great insurance bureau he deemed to be diversions of the financial responsibility.

Confidence of the country in the head of the Treasury Department was also necessary, Mr. Wilson suggested. He said at the time that the country felt much more secure with an experienced banker like Mr. Gage in the office "than when an inexperienced politician is in charge of it." Mr. Wilson's own Treasury Secretary happened to be the chairman of the Democratic national Committee at the time he was named to the place. Did the political phase of his nature did not predominate. He was managing the money and organizer of first magnitude, a man who saw clearly into the principles of finance and came time far beyond them into a new and undiscovered world. He was constructively a superbanker. The counting of money and its loan and the details of banking Mr. McAdoo left to others. He himself sat in the back room, far away from the crowd and yet close in touch with its needs, and thought out new ways in which it might be aided and at the same time in which the great institution he was running might also increase its prestige and its resources.

If Woodrow Wilson were to write again on this subject he would revise his remarks, like the Dingley tariff, "not downward but upward." That is all the change he would have to make—and in justice to the accomplishments of the Secretary in his own cabinet he would have to write an encomium even more enduring than he did for the one who held the position in President McKinley's cabinet.

The nonpartisan league is not meeting the success it planned to in the West. Reports from that section are that activities have ceased in some directions. Open meetings are not of a common occurrence, but appear to have been supplanted by clandestine

A LINE O' CHEER EACH DAY O' THE YEAR.

By John Kendrick Bangs.

HOLD FAST.

That man can ne'er grow old who keeps secure
 Within his heart and soul some of the joy

All free of care, in quality so pure,
 Of being spite of years an eager boy.

Hold fast to Boyhood, friend. The hours will fly
 Your brow will bear the mark of fleeting days,
 And TIME may dim the luster of your eye.

But HEARTS stay young that cling to youthful ways.
 (Copyright, 1918.)

affairs not bothersome in effect, but offering a sometime sufficient outlet for the thoughts of the agrarians who haven't yet fallen in constant step with America's war aims. The great battle going on at the present time in the league's ranks is that of establishing its loyalty. The membership appears to be more desirous of squaring itself with America's war aims than are some of the leaders. In spite of this, however, where the process has been achieved, the members retain their right to act independently. They do not yield so readily to the statement that one has to be loudly for the war or he is classed as disloyal. Assaults of the league, in some communities, are doing much to weld the league together by making this charge. On the whole the league is in the formative state, however. It still remains to be seen what the farmers are to do with it—and the labor elements which have been reported as friendly to its purposes. It may be that the league's influence will not be clearly established until the silent vote, subject to enrollment in it, has indicated whether it will come solidly to its standards or whether it will scatter its support among candidates. To a considerable extent what happens will depend upon the attitude taken by the candidates themselves and by the organizations and influences which are behind them.

Out of the war will come mighty forces to make the process of Americanization a more thorough one for those who want to leave Europe and make their homes here. In this respect we have been sadly derelict in our duty. The renunciation of allegiance to other potentates and powers has been a frivolous ceremony in the observance. It meant lip service, and sometimes hardly that. Our future citizens to be understood better and to respect the new realm into which they will be allowed to enter. The melting pot must also be a scouring pot for those who want citizenship. They must be washed clean of all foreign taint, and must believe in their hearts—and show that they believe it—what they say with their lips when they take on American citizenship. Future America will be molded together from the better and the worse of the world. It will not leave the process until a time when sediment and refuse enter into it to make the process impossible.

Debate on the Overman bill will indicate this week to what length the President wants to go in giving himself unusual powers. It will also show to what extent partisan activities have been present in affairs, and if this can be staged without animosity the American people will be considerably enlightened and benefited by the discussion.

THE OBSERVER.

The War Is Causing a Decrease in the Number of Lunatics.

Evidently a great national struggle makes for mental steadiness. For the past two years there has been a decrease of over 2,000 in the number of insane persons cared for in England and Wales. This fact is thought-provoking because before the war the yearly statistics showed a constantly increasing number of lunatics.—Popular Science Monthly.

Walks & Talks With John D. Barry

HELPING THE YOUNG

"I was much interested in your analysis of the woman who 'preened' herself on her success in getting men liberated from prison. Doubtless there are many such cases of that sort; but I should like to hear your suggestion as to some constructive work being done to help nice young men who have never stolen nor destroyed property nor injured anyone.

"For the life of me I cannot see why it is not just as comforting to one's amour propre to encourage boys who are hungry and thirsting for good books and for good art and good music and trying to keep clear of bad influences by not drinking, not gambling, and not keeping bad company, as to encourage all such should be our first care and then there would be fewer that would drift fallowards.

"I wish you would give us a few paragraphs on the theme, 'How to keep our boys and girls out of jail or near-jail. Then we should have greater cause to rejoice than by merely getting them out after they have gotten in.

"It is generally a defective or feeble-minded brain that shows lack of prudence and forethought, and that thinks to follow the forbidden is great sport. That is the thing a nutshell. How shall we encourage the other kind that has an instinct for beautiful art, music and books, so that they may grow up in ways of enlightenment and keep clear of the maddening crowd?"

This letter impresses me as being a very clear presentation of an attitude frequently expressed nowadays. In some of its comments, however, it does not seem to me to be quite fair. The lady I wrote about did not really "preen" herself on her success in getting men liberated from prison. She was merely delighted to discover that she had power she could put to social use. She expressed a very admirable feeling, in no way associated with conceit or vanity or any other kind of self-love.

Many people speak as if there were a conflict between helping men in prison and helping men who lead good lives. In a sense there really is. "If I had a prison record," I once heard a man say, "I suppose I could and people who would get me a job. But as I haven't I can't get anyone to do anything for me."

What he said was not literally true. There were many people trying to help men in his situation. But it was true that certain people knew or knew about were devoting considerable time and effort to securing work for prisoners, the reason being that they knew prisoners, as a rule, had desperately hard time finding and keeping work.

In this instance, I imagine that the critic of the sympathy and help now given to prisoners is a very warm interest in constructive work. It surely is good to do everything possible for young people who have never stolen or injured anyone and

Sly Shots at the Solons.

By THE OBSERVER.

Some folks on the Hill believe that no small glory for the condition of the navy should go to the Assistant Secretary, Franklin Roosevelt. But probably Mr. Daniels was responsible for Mr. Roosevelt, so there you are.

Mississippi's State legislature was the first to ratify the Federal prohibition amendment, but there is not yet a total agreement between the senators of that State on this subject. The public impression of John Sharp Williams is not. By the way, who is David Lloyd Jones?

This is election day in Wisconsin and "Jim" Lewis more than four hundred miles away.

Col. George Harvey's suggestion of doing away with the Presidential election might not be followed literally, but the effect could be gained through the usual channels. The Democrats could nominate the President for a third term and nearly everybody could then vote for him.

But what would become of Mr. Ryan's Presidential ambitions if this took place? Certainly, Col. Harvey never thought of this when he spoke.

If the House became Republican, Julius Kahn would become chairman of the Military Committee—and Tom Butler would head the Naval Committee—and Frank Gillette would head the Appropriations Committee.

Did you ever stop to think of the various kinds of Republicans there are in the Lower House from California? If there are any more varieties we would like to see them brought out.

Young Mr. Hays, Republican chairman, is going into the State of California, by the way, within a few weeks to speak and to gather horse manure. His friends told him to "have a care"—and he may have more than one before he gets out.

Several weeks ago Howard Coffin, of the Aircraft Board, had an interesting tale in the Saturday Evening Post about our aerial progress. It could make interesting reading now, indeed.

Ches. Jurney, secretary to Senator Culberson, has been searching for a way to get the map which showed the State to regions given prominence by Billy Sunday. He says that fellow will see the difference one of these days.

We are sorry to inform the public there is a vacancy in the chairmanship of the Senate Committee on Disposition of Unlabeled Papers in the Executive Departments.

OPHELIA'S SLATE.

CHEAP UP A ROLLING STONE GATHERS NO MOSS BUT IT'S GOT A ZERMON IN IT

THE BLUEBIRD
 Artcraft's Artistic Triumph
 Confronts, 10 to 11 P. M.
 WITH
 Special Ballet Prologue
 Original Scenario, Lighting, Etc.
 1:45-3:45-7:45-9:30

GARDEN
 TODAY—LAST TIME
IRENE CASTLE
 IN
 "Sylvia of the Secret Service"

LOEW'S COLUMBIA
 Continues 10:30 A. M. to 11 P. M.
 Morn., Afternoon, Evening, 10:30, 10:30, 10:30
 NOW PLAYING
ELSIE FERGUSON
 in "The Lie"